



Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, gives his thoughts for the month

Another busy month

Jim Croxton CEO, has been in post for over a month now, and he has taken up the role with a great deal of energy and enthusiasm. I'm sure as he will confirm he is not short of things to do.

I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Members and the Board to thank Tracey Maddison, who has been acting as General Manager during the interim period.

She has done a fantastic job ensuring that BIGGA keeps on track, and has shown great initiative and leadership during this time.

Tracey is continuing in this role while we undertake the strategic review and will be a great help in enabling Jim to get settled and introduced to all the stakeholders of BIGGA.

Forming productive working relationships with you all is a vital task.

I'd also like to sincerely thank all the team at BIGGA HQ and the Regional Administrators, who have continued to work tirelessly through this period, with fewer staff than we have had previously, sharing the extra work across the teams.

Well, the months are flying by now.

Just as it seems I was looking forward to summer, by the time you read this, the longest day has come and gone! While there is still a huge amount of summer work to do, minds are already turning to and preparing for the countdown and preparation for winter.

So far this year business has been good at my own course, Elmwood, and I've heard similar reports from many others.

Due to the good weather we are very busy with golfers, but as with everyone else, it's quite challenging dealing with the extended dry spell.

I know some have had it worse than others, but we thankfully have had intermittent heavy showers, which help, without impacting too much on golf.

"Make hay while the sun shines", is the proverb, and in the current economic climate, that's something we are very aware of, trying to maximise income, to give the business the best chance of balancing against lower winter income.

Our challenge as ever, is preparing the course the best we can, and nurturing and caring for it, while it takes such a high level of punishment.

Hopefully more golfers will have fonder memories of their golf this year in the good weather, and clubs will benefit from an increase in participation.

I'd like to congratulate Jim McKenzie MBE, who received this award recently in the Queen's Birthday Honours' List.

Jim and his team played a vital part in the recent European success at the Ryder Cup, as we all know, but this was not achieved on the day alone and was due to the years of preparation and improvements they made to the course, and lessons learned from successfully delivering the Wales Open for many years.

His inspirational leadership, and sheer tenacity are known to us all, but it was a delight to see this more widely recognised.

I had another busy month, on behalf of the Association.

At a meeting with the R&A we continue to explore how we can support one another's objectives.

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I attended a CMAE seminar in Scotland on Effective Governance, and the GTC-R&A workshop at Auchterarder Golf Club, which was very informative on the benefits of Sustainable Development within Golf, and how that is progressing through the collaborative efforts both locally through the Golf Unions and the Scottish Golf Environment Group, and internationally through the R&A and Golf Environment Organisation.

Thanks to the courtesy of Toro/Lely and Golf Environment Organisation I was invited to attend Wentworth for the BMW PGA Championship on the Saturday.

The course was in fantastic condition and a testament to a dedicated, skilled team led by Chris Kennedy.

You can tell a real professional, they make it all look so easy on the day.

I know how much planning, preparation, and sheer hard work there would have been during a long run up, through a tough dry spring, and the massive efforts behind the scenes.

The Support Team of volunteers from BIGGA was on hand throughout to help.

Well done to all of them for volunteering.

I'm sure the experience was well worth the effort.

Thanks also to Sherriff Amenity and Scotts Professional (now Evertis) for their hospitality at the Corporate Event held at De Vere Oulton Hotel and Golf Resort.

Jim Brown and the team presented a great venue, and it was a good opportunity to introduce Jim Croxton to many of our members and trade supporters.

On behalf of our GTC Board member, Tony Smith, who was on annual leave, I attended the GTC AGM, and introduced them to our new CEO.

This was followed by a one day workshop

for Quality Assured Education Centres and Providers.

Unfortunately I had to leave early as I rather clumsily broke one of my teeth trying to open a plastic packet.

(Not a pretty sight).

I beat a hasty retreat home, (a long drive) to seek treatment, as much for the pain as the indignity of my smile!

Lastly, the networking opportunities through BIGGA continue to expand, and we are keeping pace with modern Social Media.

Log on to Facebook or LinkedIn, search for BIGGA and take advantage of this modern phenomenon.

See you there!

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